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Sen. Hardiman announces passage of his abstinence-education bill

LANSING — The Senate passed two bills yesterday that give parents a larger role in how public schools teach sex education, Sen. Bill Hardiman, R-Kentwood, announced.

The sex-education package, Senate Bills 943 and 944, would require students be taught about the responsibility of being a parent, describe adoption as a positive option for unplanned pregnancies and encourage abstinence until marriage. The bills also would require teaching that abstinence is the only 100-percent effective way to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

“Too often lately, sex-education classes have made safe-sex education the focus, instead of stressing abstinence,” Hardiman said. “These bills correct that and work to stop the increasing numbers of young people who become infected with sexually transmitted diseases.”

The legislation also would create health-education advisory panels formed by local school boards. At least half of the members on the panels would have to be parents of students who attend the school districts.

Hardiman sponsored SB 944. The bills drew strong support from the Michigan Family Forum, Citizens for Traditional Values and the Michigan Catholic Conference. After negotiations with the governor’s office and the Michigan Department of Education, the administration and various educational associations support the legislation as well.

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